

CHAPTER - III

A FAREWELL TO INDIA (1931)

A Farewell to India (1931) is another important novel by Thompson on the theme of the fate of the English in the India made uneasy by the rise of nationalism, the beginning of which is stressed in the earlier novel, An Indian Day (1927). Thompson tries to present the picture of extreme political confusion that existed during the 1920-30 in India. The setting of the novel is again Vishnugram, the village already sketched in An Indian Day. Both the novels deal with the same characters with some minor additions. Hence it is possible to trace the development of these characters from one novel to another. This will establish a continuous focus on the related matters in connection with both the novels. Robert Alden, the hero and the spokesman of the writer himself has taken charge of the local college of Vishnugram as ^{its} ~~the~~ principal. The novel opens with the description of a school function where Alden is the chief guest. During the function Alden is thinking of the agitation started by Independent Student's Association. Some of the student members of the Association have already been rusticated from the college for their nationalistic activities. The president of this Association is causing great worry to Alden and Alden is looking for him.

Alden can not understand why the native students are resorting to violent means when they can talk openly about their demands. He can not appreciate the idea of achieving independence through violent means. His friend Findlay, the missionary is

consulted regarding the trouble-shooters. Alden's mind is full of sad thoughts when he becomes conscious of the fact that the days of British supremacy in India are over and that now it is a foregone conclusion that they will have to leave India. He tells himself that now.

"The boot was on the other leg. Education was on sufferance, and imperious and reckless Nationalism ruled the stage, jerking his students back and forth like puppets."¹

Findlay, who has accepted the life of renunciation in An Indian Day, wants to help Alden. Because he has among the Indians, a great friend in Sadhu Jayanand, Findlay arranges for a meeting between Alden and Jayanand. They visit the ashram of Sadhu Jayanand where they meet Dinabandhu Tarkachuramani, a young Indian nationalist who believes in violent means for achieving independence. His way is very different from that of the non-violent method of Mahatma Gandhi. Alden and Dinabandhu argue their viewpoints at length. Whereas Alden prescribes non-violent methods, Dinabandhu is not prepared to forget the extremist method, he and his followers have been following in their struggle against English. They won't hesitate even though lot of blood is lost that way. Sadhu Jayanand tries to make Alden see the bitter fact that Dinabandhu has become an important figure for young Indians

who don't believe in the out-of-date ways of the old people like Sadhu Jayanand.

Thus Alden is frustrated in his attempts to convey his stand to the nationalists. His frustration makes him exclaim that some supernatural powers are at work who do not allow the reconciliation between the English and Indians. The nationalists worsen the situation as the Congress gives ultimatum for the Dominion Status to India. The students start strikes out of restlessness. Religious fundamentalism starts the Suddhi (purification) movement for inviting the converts back to Hinduism. There are Sankirtans (religious processions) which try to instigate the Christians for some kind of reaction. All these happenings add to the misery of Alden who recalls how at one time the English were a force of terror for the Indians. He has a sad realization of failure in all aspects of life. He thinks that his career as a missionary or as an educationist does not have any impact. He does not believe in the changing times and is not ready to change his viewpoint. As the novel approaches the end, Alden's brief engagement as an administrator comes to an end. One day as he visits a ruined shrine near Vishnugram he discovers a hide-out of the extremists who now want to kill him for spying on them. Jayanand Sadhu asks Alden to leave India immediately to save his own life. The message disheartens Alden because he doesn't want to leave India. He sees it as an act of ingratitude in the Indians. Loneliness and alienation make him a pitiable figure and he has to face a nervous break-down. He receives the medical advice to leave India at/earliest possible and at last he sails for England

much against his mind, asking Hilda to erect some memorial in his honour if dies in England.

As compared to An Indian Day, A Farewell to India has lots of action and narrative interest. A simple episode involving Alden with the student leader ultimately forces him to ^{leave} India forever. Between these two, Alden continuously tries to make friends with the nationalists. In his argument he symbolizes the moderate point of view which had considerable following among the Indians too. But the other side has other ideas and all the efforts of Alden are non-plussed by the Indians.

✓ The political or historical content of A Farewell to India is more marked than in the earlier novel, because it dramatizes the hectic period of Indian nationalism and its inevitable impact on the British confidence. A Farewell to India is a detailed inspection of the tension which a changing India enforces on the British. The Indian politics of 1929 saw the Moderates and Militants fighting for supremacy even though their goal was same. Many incidents and happenings of the political scenario of the 1920s Indian politics get themselves dramatised in this novel. It will be an interesting exercise to compare Thompson's presentation with the documentary counterpart recorded in the books on history. As the TLS Reviewer puts it -

"A Farewell to India, by Edward Thompson ... though cast in the form of a novel, is a political dissertation rather than a story."²

✓ Throughout the novel the political and historical references on India, with original names, titles of persons, places, things

etc. keep impinging on the episode. The Bengal partition, its agitation, Gandhi's tour in Bengal, demand for the Dominion Status, Round Table Conference, 26th January 1930 as Independence Day, violation of the salt Law and Gandhi's arrest - these are the facts of Indian politics of 1920s which are reflected in this novel. The names of political leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Madan Mohan Malviya, Curzon, Irwin, Aurobindo Ghosh, Tagore, the places like - Calcutta, Trichinopoli, Boars Hill, Oxford, London point to the factual reality. Sujit Mukherjee observes :-

" . . . the novel is framed more by external events or recent Indian history, than by events which spring from the novel itself"³

Some quotations culled from the standard history books will bear this out -

"And then, on the last day of October, came from both Viceroy and Secretary of State the pronouncement that Dominion status was the acknowledged goal, and there would be a Round Table Conference" (p.169).

"A completely new Orientation in the British attitude towards political India began . . . Lord Irwin came back authorised to invite Indians to meet representative of the British Government at a Round Table Conference. This marked the end of the old system. It was probably unfortunate that the Government of India/ ^{made} simultaneously a Declaration -

that of October 31, 1929 - in which it was stated that the attainment of 'Dominion Status' was the 'natural issue of India's constitutional progress"⁴

Again chapter 46 of the novel describes the declaration of 26 January as Independence Day in a very casual manner. The sentence describing the fact seems to have been lifted from the history book. Decision to hold the Round Table Conference, also receives the same treatment.

"January 26th was appointed by the National Congress as Independence Day . . ." (p.241)

In our history we see it as an incident, a matter of our freedom struggle -

"The 26th January, 1930 was declared the Independence Day, and the people of India took a long Independence pledge on that day and repeated it on every anniversary of that Day"⁵.

Thus about half the novel rests on the Indian politics of 1929-30. It is not a co-incidence that Thompson's account closely follows the documentary sources because he wrote many expository and historical books on the problem of Indian politics of 1920s⁶. This preponderance of historical references makes Shamsul Islam criticise A Farewell to India as :-

✓ ". . . More of a political treatise than fiction"⁷

However one can not accept Islam's observation regarding Thompson's attitude to India. Islam says :-

"His fiction shows a paternalistic attitude towards India, he seems to believe in the Imperial idea with all its attendant myths. In holding these beliefs Thompson is close to Kipling"⁸.

It should be remembered that in Alden, Thompson may not be necessarily representing his own view point. What he does here is to try to give an accurate picture of the working of the mind of a sensitive Englishman like Alden. To call Thompson 'paternalistic' on this score, is doing injustice to him. He was merely dramatising factual history and voicing what majority of the Britishers felt about Indian politics.

Talking of Thompson's characters in A Farewell to India, most of them are a continuation of their role in An Indian Day. From the British side Alden, Findlay, Mayhew are important. Hilda has no special role to perform apart from instigating Alden to go on arguing.

It is the character/^{of} Alden which is all important in this novel because it is through him that Thompson presents his assesement of the Indian political scene during the period of the rise of Indian nationalism. Alden, who plays secondary role in An Indian Day, is pushed here to the centre of Thompson's interest. The novel starts with Alden's humorous presence and surprising absence from the school-function. We are given to understand that he receives some message from Sadhu Jayanand, warned of some calamity to happen in the college hostel, he feels concerned. Hilda commenting on Alden's importance says to him, " you are a standard-bearer of the Raj, which evil-minded folk

are abusing. You are a Pillar of Christianity, and the Acting Principal of a great educational institution, ... (P.P. 19,20)

To this Alden's reply is, 'By a bit of judicious buying of souls we might keep the Raj going for another century'. (p.23) Even though Alden is conscious of the British superiority, he values the Indians for their good qualities. Mayhew calls the Indians 'cowardly Bengalis'. Alden says, 'They're not cowardly. They're liable to panic, which is a different thing'. (p. 25) As he finds one of his boys maimed by the Nationalists, he decides to find out the source of all his troubles. On his way to Findlay he halts at Calcutta and has nostalgic memories of the British superiority in the days of the Raj. He feels very lonely, he thinks of the by-gone days when the Indian protest was very weak (how frailty their protest broke against the granite of the Raj ! (p.41)) But now all this has changed because Indians have become conscious of a new feeling of nationalism. In his dealings with the Indians, Alden shows humane outlook. As a coolie runs into him, he asks him angrily, 'idiot Thine eyes are - where ? (p.42) But on knowing that the poor man was afraid of something, Alden sympathises with him and says to him, 'Go in peace, Brother'. The Indian landscape is dull and boring and monotonous. The Indian existence is just like that landscape which is dull and uninteresting for Alden. Thompson gives a perceptive description of the landscape through Alden's eyes, :

"It was like this dry wrinkled landscape on which
he gazed through the carriagewindow. He knew its

features by heart - crumblings away in the red earth serving for roads into the jungle, deep fissures that must be recent since they exposed the black snaky roots of the Palas-trees that fringed them, saucers that held rain for five months and were shaded over by one of these datepalms whose fruit was so worthless". (p. 44)

At Findlay's residence Alden tries to hide his anxiety by resorting to light hearted talk with his friend over a glass of bel sherbet. He appreciates Findlay's work for the Indians. Here we come to know that Findlay has renounced the world and adopted to the new way of life like Sadhu Jayanand :

"I've learnt things I would never have dreamed possible, since I began to live this way. Once you've finished worrying about what happens in the world, every voice in the world seems to drift up to you. I listen to nothing now, but I seem to hear everything. I've begun to think the intellect is Satan himself. It's the worst of all possible nuisances and misleaders, anyway. I'm glad I no longer have any." (p. 62)

About India Alden has a very complicated attitude. On the one hand he talks of the feelings of the Indians and on the other hand he would like to have the old British glory untouched. He thinks that on getting freedom the Indians 'are going to cut

one another's throats.' He is angry with the Indians for their philosophy of freedom. His question is, 'when what India needs is to keep her nose to facts, she's gone off into abstractions.' (p. 68) Here Alden shows his British prejudice because he takes for granted that Indians are incapable of abstract thinking.

Together with Findlay he visits the ashram of Sadhu Jayanand. It is in this place that he comes across his arch enemy and the fiery nationalist Dinabandhu Tarkachuramani with whom he has a row. Right from the beginning Alden harbours a sort of ill-will towards his enemy who is described as a man with, 'the look of conceit, enthusiasm, insolence and uncertainty'. Dinabandhu himself is rude towards Alden and ignores his greetings. Alden knows that he belongs to the royal family but now he is the man, 'who has made the gesture of laying aside his pride of race and creed to link all India against us !'. (p. 74). This Dinabandhu was against all castes and favoured inter-marriages between Hindus and Muslims. 'Full independence had become his religion;... he was out of patience with Gandhi's methods and with all who played with the notion of Dominion Status. He would have India very India, one and indivisible and sovereign, no matter what blood it cost'. (p.p. 74, 75). Thus Alden is confronted with a powerful enemy. He asks Dinabandhu 'what good is violence going to do you ?'. He later asks ' what good did it to the Irish'. And 'The English can be fought down with their own

weapons of brutality and murder. They cannot be reasoned with'. (p. 78). Alden proposes two choices for the Indians, one - peaceful partnership with the Empire and two - bloodshed for the sake of independence. Dinabandhu mocks at the expression of 'peaceful partnership' and exclaims, 'your condescension is your worst insolence of all!' (p.79). Dinabandhu's solution is very simple :

"Better rivers of blood than a nation with its soul in chains!"

As Alden tries to portray the horrors of violent way and talks of both sides making sacrifices, Dinabandhu asks the harsh question :

"What sacrifices is England proposing to make ?
... The giving up of booty is not sacrifice. It is a measure demanded by the police, when a thief is run to ground. And why, '.... is any other than a peaceful solution unthinkable ? It is very thinkable to us. India has been subjugated by blood, she shall win freedom by blood. Do you think we are afraid of being shot down by your machine-guns ?" (p.81)

Thus the interview comes to an abrupt end. Alden's attitude throughout is full of superior airs. He has taken for granted the Indian's inability to run the government and ^{talks} like a typical imperialist. He talks of both the sides making sacrifices for the sake of peaceful solution. Sadhu Jayanand

and Findlay correctly analyse the mistake committed by Alden. In fact Findlay rightly says, 'he jawed to Dinabandhu as if we were still in 1925, instead of 1929' (p.81). It is interesting to know that Dinabandhu looks on Non-Violence as a private fad of Gandhi. The Sadhu also points out that in his arguments with the nationalists Alden is tactless, 'You English never learn that the age has moved until it is too late. Your diehards are still on the old chatter about Indian agitation being the work of a few half-baked clerks'. (p.83) And again, 'you've been answering arguments that weren't there, you've been shooting at a bird, that flew away years since (p.83) Findlay shares the Sadhu's views and asks his friend to see sense. The Sadhu again warns both of them, 'the unchanging East has become Vesuvius. Alden, you'll have special reasons for special watchfulness and special action, as long as you stay in India' (p.85). It is the prophetic understanding of Sadhu Jayanand which is the realisation of Alden's dilemma. The Sadhu addressing Alden and Findlay sympathises with them and says :

"I am as out of date and obsolete as you two fellows. We belong to an India that has gone out as completely as the India of John Company days. There is Alden perpetuating the tradition of paternalism. Graciously interested in the folk and their ways, touched by their poetry - you see, Alden, I grant you a great deal." (p.p. 88,89)

To this Alden's reply is touching. His confession underlines the immense interest he has in India which unfortunately has completely changed. He doesn't accept the theory that the British are in India only for the sake of exploiting the Indians, 'we simply don't look on India as alien, least of all when we are following our fathers'... (p.89) Alden knows that the India of the old days is no more and that it is no use crying over the lost paradise.

Findlay, who is also in love with India, has a firmer grasp on the Indian political reality when he says, 'It has all gone - my dreams and your service. You have a new India on the stage, one that has seen wealth and power and arrogance, and wants to have a hand in the game.' (p. 90) In spite of the Sadhu's comments and Findlay's observations, Alden is not ready to change his views. Talking of Gandhi he makes this comment. 'His non-violence is just part of the whole foolery, one with your and our harking back to finished ideals and dreams.' (p. 91). Findlay doesn't agree with him. He has high hopes about India and says 'India is bound to get back to her old high roads, though she is doing this bumpy detour for a time.' (p.p. 91, 92) Findlay sums up the debate by saying that peace will come only when 'England and India come face to face' and, 'not while the non-violent humbug talks to the look - what - we - have - done - for - India humbug.' (p.93) His solution to the problem is 'the unbragging India coming face to face with the unbragging England'. (p.93).

The particular chapter (13) has been analysed in detail simply because it is the centre of the novel. It makes several things clear. As for characterisation it subtly unravels Alden's viewpoint which is a strange mixture of the old British arrogance yielding to the demands of the changing times and making room for moderation in British thinking about India. Highly sympathetic and humane towards India and Indians as Alden is, it is also clear that in his sub-conscious mind he is not ready to accept the new subsidiary role history has instore for the British in India, who are confronted with the challenge of Indian nationalism. He is wise enough to hear the rumblings in the air and knows the writing on the wall but his subconscious mind does not allow him to cross the old inhibitions.

In Findlay's character Thompson introduces a variation. Because he has understood the Indian philosophy of holistic approach which doesn't care for the individual and which believes in merging the individual in the universal, Findlay is able to understand the language of Sadhu Jayanand and it is he who interprets his meaning to Alden. Thus Findlay is a foil to the character of Alden. Whereas one remains a Britisher throughout, the other influenced by Indian way of thinking is ready to accept reality eventhough it is against the British in India. Apart from these two, other English characters are marginal and don't require much attention.

From the Indian side the character of Dinabandhu

Tarkachuramani is interesting for Thompson's perceptive appreciation of the Indian desire for freedom. It is a historical reality that there was a group of youngsters craving for freedom for India. These young people believed in the violent way to achieve their goal. Thompson successfully catches their aspirations, their intense hatred for the atrocities heaped on India by the British across the ages, and also their irritation with Gandhi and his non-violence. The bitter language used by Dinabandhu has not a jot of exaggeration because the extremists really hated Gandhi for obstructing their plan to destroy as many Englishmen as possible by way of revenge for the atrocities committed in the incidents like Jalianwalla Bagh and the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Sadhu Jayanand represents the age old Indian philosophy which does not take sides, views the happenings in this world from a higher level as it were and puts them in perspective. Therefore it is the comments of the Sadhu which contain the words of wisdom and satisfy Findlay, to some extent Alden and the readers of Thompson. We clearly find that Thompson no longer makes Alden his spokesman. That job is entrusted now to Sadhu Jayanand in whom Thompson finds a kindred spirit. To blame Thompson for his paternalistic viewpoint by equating Alden's point of view with that of Thompson himself is unjust⁹. It is true that Alden prepares to leave India saying '... I've done nothing... I've achieved nothing... I'm sure of nothing - nothing at all ! But don't let anyone tell you I've given the fight over. I'm not out of it'. (p.271)

What remains in the novel after the fateful meeting between Alden and Dinabandhu is not very important. Alden's accidental second meeting with Dinabandhu at Klemmon Saheb's shrine appears rather theatrical and contrived. It does not add to our knowledge of the situation and the characters as we know them already. A man like Dinabandhu after catching Alden alone in his secret place will never allow him to escape unhurt. Thompson wants to create a sort of sensation by introducing this scene. Other chapters which show us Alden talking to Hilda about his problems, his dealing with the local people are also sort of padding. But through them we receive the impression that Alden is an interesting character. The T.L.S. reviewer has his finger on this point when he says :

"If Hilda Hamar be regarded as anything more real than the giver of cues for Alden's speeches, the conclusion follows, inevitably for the reader but quite inconsistently with the general trend of the book, that Alden is flirting rather dangerously with his wife's sister."¹⁰

As a political novel A Farewell to India successfully catches all the anxiety, the hectic activity, the thrill on the Indian side in the days of the rise of nationalism and also the worry, the nostalgia, the fear and sadness in the English camp. It is creditable on the part of Thompson that he does not take any sides. He blames both, the English and the Indians. He also realises the value of the work of Mahatma

Gandhi. His scientific temperament can't make him accept everything from the philosophy of Mahatma. Look at this perceptive analysis of the role of Gandhi in Indian politics and Alden's appreciation of it :

"HE SAW AND HEARD A MAN WHO HAD CEASED TO BE one of us, and had become an elemental being - a gust blowing up from the earth, a passion enclosed (and barely enclosed) in a wizened, worn-out body. He listened to economics that were twenty years and more out of date, and their mistakes were as nothing beside the fact that centuries of poverty and exploitation had found a voice. Through a human reed suffering was speaking - not its own, but a nation's. He heard history grotesquely at variance with actuality; and this, too, was nothing beside the truth that the whole East had its terrible indictment against the white beast that has ranged the planet with such vision and cruel strength and ruthless purpose. He was troubled, as a man who loved and honoured this frail human wisp by the undertone of weariness, as from a will whose resources are exhausted, though the driving fire remains that must urge it on to self-destruction. Behind the speaker were forces of ruin, which he was serving, though aware of them, and anxious to escape them. 'The man's fey', he thought. 'It is no longer Gandhiji

that is speaking, but something that is going to burst into the Age, and to shatter it. (pp. 143, 144)

Alden's comment on Gandhi is equally perceptive and moving. He says, 'the spirit of God has used this man, and has nearly done with him, - - - . He cannot last much longer. No human body could be the lamp of such a flame, and persist. He has done his work, and will be going. I can see a score of places where he has been wrong, and often woefully wrong. But I wish my people could have been his friends. I know he's wrong, yet I daren't say he's wrong.' (pp. 144 - 145)

It is Alden again who blames the Indians saying, 'A fight for freedom against the oppressor ! They neither see our soul, nor India's soul. I don't understand it at all. I'm as much in the dark as to what has been happening as I ever was'. (p.145). Thompson tries to do something more than allowed by the structure of the novel form.

Thompson writes here a politico - historical novel on the contemporary reality of his times. He selects some actual events and personalities of the time. This acceptance of content inevitably puts limits on his art. The structure of his novel suffers because of introduction of long debates between Alden and Dinabandhu. But he did not have any other way to present the contrasted view points of the two characters. Hence he gives direct arguments between them. This leaves

very small room for incidents and characterisation. This also makes the novel more documentary and in a sense monotonously discursive and shapeless. An ordinary reader coming to the novel merely for entertainment is bound to get scared by all that talk of Gandhi, nationalists and the Englishmen in India.

There is an element of humour in Alden's light - hearted comments on the babu English spoken by some of the Indian characters, 'The dishipline of this i-shkole has been bhery good' (p.11). The phonological deviations in such a statement are interesting for Thompson's careful observation of the Indian speech habits. Describing the headmaster of the school in the 1st chapter of the novel, he says, '... he was a fervent devotee of goddess Kali, and no less fervent devotee of gunja'. (p.10). Equally humorous is the talk between the two students Jadu and Madu about the Agricultural Exhibition. There is another piece of bombastic babu English spoken by Kamala Babu:

"Owing to inadequate monsoon, ... litigation has been insufficient. I have been fighting with tooth and nail to keep wolf from door. During last year I have earned miserable livelihood by sponging my father-in-law. (p.p. 242, 243).

Like An Indian Day Thompson shows that he has absorbed the Indian reality in his knowledge of Indian culture, languages and religion. Expressions such as 'agnim ile purohitam' (I worship Agni the priest) taken from the Vedas point out his inwardness of Indian reality. Words such as 'gunja', 'Chabutra',

'Panchayat', 'bhut', 'ashram', 'Mahant', 'hartal', 'Suddhi', 'Sankirtan', 'bel', 'nishkam', 'pret', 'mela', 'puja', 'tamasha', underline the same fact. Hilda's baby returns from his evening 'eating' of the air' (p.22) is an expression which is literal translation of the Bengali equivalent. The mother of the Indian boy, saved by Alden says to him, 'you are my giver - of - life'. (P.49). Thompson was interested in the mystical aspect of Indian religion. In fact, he knows all subtleties of the Indian pantheon which includes the devatas like Lakshmi, Rudra, Padalsini. There are also his favourite 'bhuts', and Alden addresses Jayanand as 'Vairagi'. There are many references to the doings of 'bhuts' that wander in the night in different forms. Thompson's knowledge of Indian folk - beliefs is admirably correct and he refers to them time and again in the novel to give us the feel of the land. The Sun and the snakes are the two important entities for the Englishmen in India. About the 'bhuts' Hilda says :

"Of course there are bhuts! Tell them that we know there are bhuts everywhere. That I went by no less than three trees this morning which are known to be infested by a whole family of bhuts, one of them having three ears and seven eyes. That there's a bhutish tree in my own compound'. (p. 106)

But these references to the 'bhuts' are not for the sake of decoration. Thompson makes creative use of them when he makes Alden say :

"I'm beginning to believe in bhuts - in something dull, stupid, brute, malignant, invulnerable, with feet that take hold of the very soil. And it's in league with other bhuts, that are not bhuts at all, but devatas, living in an upper air of dreams and enthusiasms. It's an unnatural alliance, but a powerful." (p. 119)

There is also a British bhut, that of Klemmon Saheb.

Thompson gives perceptive description of the fear of the leopard or the bagh for the Indians. Thompson deals with this matter in a light - hearted manner. As the villagers report to Alden that a leopard had killed two of their cows, he feels like saying 'write to Mahatma Gandhi'. Thompson also knows about talkativeness of the Indians. Giving an account of meeting of College Board of Trustees, Alden exposes their hypocrisy. As Alden asks them to work for the country, one of them says, "What work, when beloved Motherland is perishing?". Alden proposes, 'let's begin with that foul cesspit that's been lying since the beginning of things, just outside the Vishnugram hospital'. "But 'motherland is starving while we talk'. (p. 159) - that is the conclusion of the Indians who refuse to work. Thompson knows about 'Siva' the destroyer, the 'bel', 'tulasi' and 'lingam'. He also refers to the traditional tug between Hindus and Muslims. He knows about 'iti' which refers to a religious function for women described thus :

"They were gathering the wild plants of the wet land where the rice grows. These signify the natural fertility of the ground. They keep them in their houses over the Kartik puja - Kartik is the God of War, and a very virile, vigorous, splendid fellow. That's all I ever found out, and it's more than any book can tell you. The men say what they always say when you ask them about religion, that the women know that it is a women's business." (pp. 178, 179)

The final message of A Farewell to India is far from pleasant for the English. It is not hopeless only for Alden who has tried and failed but also for a man like Hamar who is disgusted so much so that he talks of giving up the whole struggle saying :

"It won't take so very much more of this nonsense to convince our people of what you and I know already, that this Indian job has ceased to be worth the infinite bother it has become and all the hatred and lying and misery it brings along. They're not our race, they don't think our thoughts. Why the devil were we ever tied up with them, and sent revolving on the same wheel of destiny ? I half believe the bhuts will decide that our time is up." (p. 280)

Alden voices the same feeling when he asks, is there

anywhere in the whole wide world, a raggeder job than the Englishman's in India ?' (p. 283). As his wife asks him, 'why did you choose it ?' He answers in his usual light - hearted manner :

"I didn't choose it. It was on my forehead. Listen. In my last incarnation I turned a machine-gun on to a flock of cows and Brahmins as they were entering the Ganges to bathe. That minute of careless unthinking pleasure was my undoing. The demiurge, after a lingering frown which raised tornadoes in all parts of the globe and wrecked a whole fleet of planets elsewhere, decided that the only fit punishment was to make me teach the sons of Brahmins how to paraphrase Meelton and Sheksper and to chase cows out of my painfully raised vegebottle garden. And to strive against great odds and ends generally". (p. 283)

This refreshingly clean attitude makes Alden finally request Hilda :

"Set apart a shrine for me. It must be somewhere that will satisfy the ghost of John also, that we may walk the jungles together, and do great good to all the countryside. There must be a dry river-bed; and a stretch of unpolled sal-forest. There must be a specially planted copse of pomegranates allowed to merge into the wild. Not less than three bushes of the Indian

laburnum. And a long heath open to the white Indian sunset. And a notice, in English, Sanskrit, Hindi and Bengali, must warn everyone who walks there that he must put his gun aside, and slay neither bird nor beast. And John and I will watch the bears gather the mohwa flowers, and the crows squabble in the simul bowls, and the parrots race overhead, and the hoopoes strut in the evening sunshine - everything good in its own sweet season." (p.p. 287, 288)

And finally Hilda promises to erect that shrine for the peace of his soul.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Edward Thompson, A Farewell to India, Macmillan and Co.Limited, St.Martin's Street London, 1933. pp. - 41-42.
All quotations are from this edition.
2. The Times Literary Supplement, a review of A Farewell to India, Thursday, January 15, 1931.
3. Sujit Mukherjee, (1993), p.122.
4. Thompson, Edward, J., The Rise and fulfilment of British Rule in India, Central Book Depot, Allahabad, 1958, p.568.
5. H.H. Dodwell, (Ed.) The Cambridge History of India, Vol. VI, p.613.
6. See Bibliography for the list of his expository writings.
7. Shamsul Islam, (1979), p.52.
8. *ibid* p.62.
9. Shamsul Islam, (1979), p.62 - Shamsul Islam observes his attitude towards India and Indians and calls it a 'paternalistic attitude', but it is unjust.
10. The Times Literary Supplement, a review of A Farewell to India, Thursday, January 15, 1931.